

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 21309 01 OF 03 241245Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----010503 241307Z /47

P R 241226Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4285
INFO USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 21309

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, TSPA, GW, UR, CG, US, UK, FR
SUBJECT: RESPONDING TO SOVIET DEMARCHE ON OTRAG

REF: A. STATE 299623 B. BONN 19429 C. STATE 200972

BEGIN SUMMARY: LONDON FAVORS A "BRIEF AND NEGATIVE"
REPLY TO THE SOVIET DEMARCHE CONCERNING THE OTRAG ROCKET
TESTING FACILITY. PARIS HOPES THAT THE US AND THE UK
WILL SUPPORT THE LINE ALREADY TAKEN BY DEFENSE MINISTER
BOURGES WITH USTINOV--THAT THE SOVIET CONCERNS SEEM
"UNFOUNDED AND EXAGGERATED." THE BRITISH AND FRENCH
EMBASSIES THUS DOUBT THAT THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO
PERSUADE CAPITALS TO AGREE TO A REPLY WHICH GOES AS
FULLY INTO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE OTRAG OPERATION AS
DOES THE DRAFT SUGGESTED BY THE DEPARTMENT.
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WE SHARE THE VIEW OF THE BRITISH AND
FRENCH HERE THAT IT WOULD NOT BE DESIRABLE TO TELL
THE SOVIETS FORMALLY THAT THEIR DEMARCHE MOTIVATED US
TO ASK THE FRG FOR AN ACCOUNTING--OR TO ASK THE GERMANS
TO AGREE TO SUCH A REPLY. IT SEEMS PREFERABLE
SIMPLY TO STATE THAT THE FRG HAS ALREADY ANSWERED THE

SOVIET COMPLAINT (WHICH WAS IN THE FIRST INSTANCE ADDRESSED TO THE FRG), ADDING THAT WE OURSELVES ARE SATISFIED THAT THERE IS NO BASIS FOR CONCERN. IN THE PROCESS, WE SHOULD CAST DOUBT ON THE EXISTENCE OF RELEVANT QUADRIpartite RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES. ACTION REQUESTED: THE EMBASSY ACCORDINGLY RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF THE AD REF DRAFT REPLY IN PARA 1 BELOW. END SUMMARY.

1. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE US, UK, AND FRENCH EMBASSIES MET DECEMBER 23 TO COMPARE INSTRUCTIONS AND COORDINATE THE DRAFTING OF A RESPONSE WHICH THE THREE GOVERNMENTS MIGHT MAKE TO THE AUGUST 22 SOVIET DEMARCHE (REF C). FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT ON WHICH AD REF AGREEMENT WAS REACHED (WITH SUITABLE CHANGES TO BE MADE IN THE OPENING SENTENCE IN LONDON AND PARIS):
BEGIN TEXT

I WISH TO REFER TO (AMBASSADOR DOBRYNIN'S) STATEMENT OF AUGUST 22, WHEN HE PRESENTED TO (THE ACTING SECRETARY) A COPY OF A DEMARCHE WHICH YOUR GOVERNMENT HAD MADE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FRG CONCERNING THE OTRAG ROCKET TESTING FACILITY IN ZAIRE. WE HAVE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED THE MATTERS RAISED IN THAT STATEMENT, INCLUDING THE REFERENCE TO QUADRIpartite RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER "KNOWN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS," IN CONSULTATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT.
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MENTS OF THE UK AND FRANCE, WHICH WERE ALSO APPROACHED BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT AT THAT TIME. WE HAVE ALSO CONSULTED THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FRG.

IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FRG HAS RESPONDED TO YOUR GOVERNMENT'S DEMARCHE. WE FOR OUR PART ARE SATISFIED THAT NO GROUNDS EXIST FOR THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT. END TEXT.

2. IN THE DISCUSSION WHICH ULTIMATELY LED TO THE ABOVE DRAFT, CARTER (UK) STATED THAT LONDON HAD INSTRUCTED THE UK EMBASSY TO COORDINATE WITH THE US AND FRENCH EMBASSIES IN DEVELOPING A "BRIEF AND NEGATIVE REPLY." CARTER HAD ACCORDINGLY PREPARED A TWO-SENTENCE DRAFT FOR CONSIDERATION. ON LEVEL OF DELIVERY, LONDON'S VIEW WAS THAT THE REPLY SHOULD BE DELIVERED AT AN APPROPRIATE "OFFICIAL" LEVEL--I.E., NOT BY JUNIOR MINISTER TOMLINSON, TO WHOM THE SOVIET CHARGE HAD PRESENTED THE DEMARCHE IN AUGUST.

3. ACCORDING TO RICHARD (FRANCE), USTINOV HAD RAISED OTRAG WITH DEFENSE MINISTER BOURGES IN MOSCOW IN

OCTOBER. BOURGES HAD REPLIED THAT THE CONCERN EXPRESSED

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P R 241226Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4286
INFO USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
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BY THE SOVIETS SEEMED TO THE FRENCH TO BE "UNFOUNDED AND EXAGGERATED." INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE QUAI STATED THAT THIS WAS THE FRENCH POSITION, WHICH PARIS WOULD LIKE TO MAINTAIN IN THE ABSENCE OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS. THE QUAI HOPED THE US AND THE UK WOULD TAKE A SIMILAR LINE WITH THE SOVIETS. RICHARD STATED IT WAS NOT CLEAR FROM HIS INSTRUCTIONS WHETHER THE FRENCH CONSIDERED THAT BOURGES HAD DISPOSED OF THE MATTER. HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE DRAFTING OF A REPLY WAS THUS ACCOMPANIED BY THE CAVEAT THAT HE WAS NOT CERTAIN THAT PARIS WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONTEMPLATE ANY ADDITIONAL STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT.

4. THE US REP PRESENTED THE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS ON LEVEL OF DELIVERY OF THE REPLY AND ON THE NEED FOR REACHING AGREEMENT ON A REPLY ON A PRIORITY BASIS. NOTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT CONSIDERED IT
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DESIRABLE TO REPLY RATHER FULLY TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SOVIET COMPLAINT, HE DISTRIBUTED COPIES OF THE PROPOSED TEXT IN REF A.

5. BOTH CARTER AND RICHARD THOUGHT, ON THE BASIS OF THEIR INSTRUCTIONS, THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN ACCEPTANCE OF THE US DRAFT IN THEIR RESPECTIVE CAPITALS. LONDON THOUGHT, ACCORDING TO CARTER, THAT THE MORE ONE SAID ABOUT THE MATTER THE MORE ONE DIGNIFIED THE SOVIET COMPLAINT. CARTER ALSO THOUGHT LONDON WOULD NOT BE PREPARED TO INDICATE TO THE SOVIETS THAT WE HAD APPROACHED THE FRG ON SOVIET INSTRUCTIONS, AS IT WERE. HE THUS ARGUED THAT THE REPLY SHOULD BE LIMITED TO STATING, IN ESSENCE, THAT WE WERE SATISFIED THAT THERE WAS NOTHING SINISTER GOING ON IN ZAIRE AND THAT, EVEN IF THERE WERE, IT WAS NOT A MATTER TO WHICH QUADRIPARTITE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ATTACHED.

6. RICHARD ALSO THOUGHT THAT HE WOULD HAVE A MUCH BETTER CHANCE OF GETTING APPROVAL OF A BRIEF REPLY IN PARIS THAN OF A DETAILED ONE, GIVEN HIS INSTRUCTION DESCRIBING THE BOURGES STATEMENT AS FRENCH POLICY.

7. BECAUSE OF THIS BRITISH AND FRENCH RELUCTANCE TO DEVELOP A REPLY TREATING THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MATTER, US REP AGREED TO WORK ON A BRIEFER REPLY WHICH WOULD THEN BE RECOMMENDED TO THE DEPARTMENT. THE DRAFT IN PARA 1 ABOVE REPRESENTS A FLESHING OUT OF THE ORIGINAL UK DRAFT AND IS ONE WHICH ALL THREE REPS WERE PREPARED TO RECOMMEND.

8. ONE DIFFICULTY ENCOUNTERED WAS IN FINDING A FORMULA TO TREAT THE SOVIET INVOCATION OF QUADRIPARTITE RIGHTS
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AND RESPONSIBILITIES. ALL REPS AGREED THAT DOUBT SHOULD BE CAST ON THE APPLICABILITY OF SUCH RIGHTS TO THE OTRAG CASE, THOUGH RICHARD WAS DUBIOUS THAT PARIS WOULD AGREE TO A CATEGORICAL REJECTION OF THE IDEA WITHOUT FURTHER RESEARCH. AT THE SAME TIME, REPS THOUGHT IT WAS INAPPROPRIATE TO SUGGEST THAT THE FRG HAD DISPOSED OF THAT ISSUE, AS IT WOULD NOT BE FOR THE FRG TO RULE ON THE QUESTION OF OCCUPATION RIGHTS RETAINED BY THE FOUR POWERS, IF THOSE WERE WHAT THE SOVIETS WERE ALLUDING TO. THE WORDING IN THE AD REF TEXT WAS MEANT TO TAKE THOSE CONSIDERATIONS INTO ACCOUNT.

(FYI: THE WORDING IN PARA 2C OF THE DEPARTMENT'S DRAFT

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P R 241226Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4287
INFO USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
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SUGGESTS THAT OUR ACCOUNT OF BLECH'S BRIEFING OF ALLIED
DCM'S MAY HAVE BEEN MISLEADING. IT IS NOT OUR UNDER-
STANDING THAT VAN WELL EXPLAINED TO FALIN THE LEGAL
BASIS FOR THE FRG POSITION--ONLY THAT HE REJECTED THE
SOVIET POSITION.)

9. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE UK AND
FRENCH POSITIONS, BELIEVING THAT THERE IS NOTHING
TO BE GAINED BY GIVING THE SOVIETS FACTS ABOUT THE
OTRAG OPERATION WHICH THEY ALREADY KNOW. MORE IMPOR-
TANT, WE WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO ASK THE FRG TO AGREE TO
A REPLY SUCH AS THAT IN REF A WITHOUT FURTHER CON-
SIDERATION OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF DOING SO. WHILE
WE DID, IN POINT OF FACT, ASK THE FRG FOR EXPLANATIONS
AS A RESULT OF THE SOVIET DEMARCHE TO US, WE BELIEVE
IT INADVISABLE IN TERMS OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP
WITH THE FRG TO INFORM THE SOVIETS FORMALLY THAT WE
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HAVE DONE SO--OR TO ASK THE FRG TO AGREE TO A US REPLY WHICH MAKES IT APPEAR THAT WE GAVE THE SOVIET DEMARCHE ENOUGH CREDENCE TO ASK THE GERMANS FOR AN ACCOUNTING.

10. WE WILL NOT TRY OUT THE TEXT IN PARA 1 ABOVE ON THE GERMANS UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT AGREES TO THE USE OF A NON-SUBSTANTIVE REPLY. WE RECOMMEND SUCH A REPLY, HOWEVER, BOTH BECAUSE AGREEMENT WITH THE BRITISH AND FRENCH IS LIKELY TO BE MADE EASIER AND BECAUSE IT WOULD IN OUR VIEW BE MORE PALATABLE TO THE GERMANS AND ALSO MORE CONSISTENT WITH THE NATURE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIETS AND THE FRG.

11. ACTION REQUESTED: APPROVAL OF THE TEXT IN PARA 1 ABOVE AND AUTHORIZATION TO SEEK FRG CONCURRENCE IN THAT TEXT.
STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
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